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dence by essentially the same means with our own forefathers, we heard a Southern stickler for "the right of revolution," and of "war to the hilt," denouncing them as "a nation of slaves who rose, and cut their masters' throats;"—their leader "an insurrectionist and a revolutionist;"—their government "a government of insurrectionists;"—"the only body of men that ever emancipated themselves by butchering their masters." Recognize "insurrectionary negroes? No, never will I! Never will my constituents, be driven to say in effect to our slaves,—‘When you have cut the throats of your masters, you will be acknowledged by England and the Northern States as republican freemen.’” But our revolutionary heroes said all this in effect to every bondman in the world. They went from first to last on the very principle here so indignantly spurned. Were they not all insurrectionists and revolutionists? Do not the great mass of their descendants still assert the right of revolution as altogether unquestionable? We dare not carry out our own principles. If the actors in our Revolution were right, the Haytiens were right, the Texans were right, the Canadians were right, and the slaves at the South would be perfectly justifiable in wading to freedom through the blood of every master that should resist their demand of rights inalienably guaranteed to them by God and nature. SIRIS.

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#### WAR-DEGENERACY OF THE CHURCH.

*"The Church has always been right in regard to peace."*—WILLIAM ALLEN, D. D.

##### No. I.

Self-reform is a process too humiliating to be urged upon the mass of Christians themselves, without open complaints or secret murmurings. If you will flatter their self-esteem by calling upon them to labor for the reformation of others, to relieve the children of want and suffering, or to spread the gospel through the world, they may as a body respond to your call; but, if you start at home a work of reform which includes themselves among its proper subjects, and press upon them the duty of coöperation, you administer an implicit reproof which many will denounce as a libel on the household of faith. They will tell you, that the church, though confessedly im-

perfect, is still right *in the main*; that there is no need of any *essential* change in *her*; that your only field of reform lies beyond her pale, among men of the world; and that, while laboring to reclaim them, you must be very careful not to mar the good name of God's elect. You must put an end to the use and sale of ardent spirits, without implicating the church in the guilt of a practice sustained for generations by her own members and ministers. You must abolish slavery, without any rebuke of a slave-holding church. You must banish the demon of war from Christendom, without the least impeachment of a church which has for fifteen centuries lent her support to a war-system the most extended, the most expensive and destructive to be found on the face of the globe.

Far be it from me to stand forth a willing accuser of my brethren; but I submit it to every intelligent reader, whether this sheltering of error and sin under the wing of the church as a sanctuary exempt from assault, has not been for ages the usual course, the grand climax of degeneracy in Christendom? History tells us, every eye can see the deplorable result in the corruption of Christian faith and morals on a vast variety of points. The devil has crept into the ark of God, the serpent has wound his way into Eden, and coiled his slimy folds around the very tree of life; and there he claims the right to remain unmolested as a favorite of Heaven, and hatch whatever mischief his infernal ingenuity can devise.

Now, I ask how the church and surrounding world are to be rescued from a degeneracy like this. Can we reform the latter without disturbing the former? Never; we must *begin* with the church, and use her example and agency, when reformed, as the grand instrument under God of reclaiming the world. Not that we should never do any thing to the latter until we have won the former to her whole duty; such a course would be absolutely impossible. But I think our *main* anxiety should be first to get the church right, as the pioneer and chief agent of reform in society.

We look, then, to the church, and ask if she is right on the subject of peace. Is there no need of reform among her own members? Are they all on this subject what the gospel of peace requires them to be both in faith and practice? I did suppose the answer to such questions too plain to be denied or doubted by any person of ordinary intelligence; for all Christendom has for ages teemed with proofs of the war-degeneracy

of the church. I see not how any man in his senses can doubt it. Compare the instructions of Christ and his apostles with those of his ministers for centuries, or contrast the practice of his first disciples with that of his followers from the days of Constantine the Great to the present hour; and to an unprejudiced eye the difference would appear almost like the change from the blaze of noon to the darkness of midnight.

But I would not rely on mere assertions; and, inasmuch as some of our ablest men deny the war-degeneracy of the church, and tell us that *she* “has *always* been right in regard to peace,” that “the church is *already* gained, and we have *only* to gain the world,” it may be well to show her actual state, by quoting her opinions, and appealing to her practice. It is an immense field; but I shall not attempt to traverse the whole, and shall for the present confine myself to the statement of a few points which stand out in lamentable prominence on nearly all the pages of modern history.

1. The church, ever since the fourth century, has as a body denied the natural, obvious import of the gospel on this subject. Its pacific precepts are so plain that infidels themselves have been constrained to admit their meaning as understood by primitive Christians; but these precepts have been so perverted by the ingenuity of a degenerate church, as either to mean almost nothing at all, or to sanction the very things they were so clearly designed to condemn.

2. Christians have, during all this period, recognized war as an ordinance of God for the regulation of intercourse, and the settlement of disputes, between nations. Its evils they have indeed acknowledged and deplored, yet still regarded them, like those of civil government, as by no means invalidating its claims to universal support. They would preserve the system, and merely guard it against abuse. This I take to be the *general* sentiment of Christians at the present day.

3. Thus have they silently acquiesced in the continuance of the war-system under the light of the gospel itself, for more than fifteen centuries. Exceptions, I grant, there have been; but they have been extremely rare, scarcely one in a thousand, if more than one in a million, having in all this time insisted on the entire abolition of this custom, or the utter abandonment of it by Christians, as contrary to their religion of peace and love.

4. The church has, also, lent her *active* support to the custom of war. Her ministers have justified and eulogized its agents before the world. She has been wont uniformly to pray for the smiles of Heaven upon its work of death, and to return solemn thanks for its bloody and baleful successes. Her members have trained their own sons to war as the business of their lives, instigated others to the same employment, and gone themselves into fleets and camps. The Pope has for ages had warriors of his own to fight his battles; the monarchs of Protestant nations are at once the heads of the churches in their dominions, and commanders-in-chief of their forces; and in England itself no man could, till recently, bear in the army or navy a commission for the wholesale butchery of mankind, without becoming a member of the Established Church, and thus going from the very table of our Lord, spread with the hallowed emblems of forgiveness, peace and love, to shoot, and stab, and hew down the enemies of his country!

5. Nor is this all; for Christians have actually waged war themselves, and thought they were doing a high service for God. Look at the crusades sustained for centuries by the whole church as a most sacred, most exalted duty, and regarded as a sure passport to the highest rewards of heaven! Long was it thought the noblest effort of piety to fight Mohammedans, and force the unevangelized to embrace Christianity, and receive her symbols of purity and love at the point of the sword. England, Scotland, France, Germany, all Europe have been theatres of the fiercest, bloodiest wars waged by Christians for *religious* purposes. A fighter for his *religion* was the highest style of the Christian! The wars of the Reformation alone, nearly all baptized as services for God, are said to have sacrificed no less than 30,000,000 Christian lives!

6. To all this we must add the humiliating fact, that the great body of Christians, take the world over, still cling to the war-system with all its acknowledged evils, refuse to do any thing whatever for its abolition, and even frown upon those who would, as contradicting the gospel of peace, and as striving to demolish what God himself has ordained, and what even the Prince of peace is supposed still to sanction and support!

Yet we are told that "*the church has always been right*" on this subject! No need of any change in *her* opinions or practice; but *all* our efforts at reform must be directed to those monsters of blood who hold sentiments *worse* than these! We

need only bring the world up to the church on this subject, and wars will cease for ever ! Up to the church *as she now is* ?  
Credat Judæus Apelles. ERASMUS.

RECENT ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE WAR-SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH.

1. *The western mother.* When the Texans were in rebellion against the Mexican government, and fighting desperately for the right to hold slaves at pleasure, a mother at the west, reputedly pious, wrote to her son, then on his way to join the Texan rebels, a letter all on fire with the spirit of war, rejoicing at his enlistment in such a cause, bidding him fight bravely against the mighty power of Santa Anna, and expressing the hope that he would return unharmed, but the fullest confidence that, if he fell in battle, his spirit would mount in triumph to heaven, and there meet the reward of his valor ! This letter was published by some *religious* periodicals as a specimen of patriotism and piety worthy of the highest admiration !

2. *The sympathy of church-members on our northern frontier in the Canadian rebellion.* This rebellion was sustained, if not started, by an influence from the United States. Secret associations for the purpose, called Hunter's Lodges, were formed all along the line ; and in those lodges were found not a few of the professed followers of the Prince of peace. So strong was the sympathy, even among reputed Christians, for the Canadian insurgents, as to make it hazardous for a minister's reputation, if not for his person, to say aught against that wicked and abortive insurrection ; and, when one preacher lauded the rebels, his congregation burst forth into noisy applause. Such were the views pretty generally expressed on our side of the line, before our government took decisive measures to prevent the armed interference of our citizens in the troubles of Canada ; and we know not that these views were then, or have since been, reprobated to any considerable extent as unchristian.

3. *The late war-movement in Maine.* Not a little had been done in that State to enlighten and rectify public opinion on the subject of peace; yet, when political partizans jumped upon the boundary question as a hobby on which to ride into power, and blew the tocsin of war, scarce a whisper could be heard from any part of even the Christian community there against a resort to arms for the settlement of that long pending dispute. Dissenters there certainly were; but it was well nigh impossible for them to get their remonstrances published even by any religious newspaper in the State; nor was it till after public sentiment in other parts of the country had frowned the movement into general contempt, that Christian editors there ceased to justify it.

4. *A deacon in 1839.* When one of our agents recently visited a town, about twenty-five miles from Boston, to plead the cause of peace before the *evangelical* church there, its senior deacon, in good repute for his piety, and superintendent of the Sabbath school, refused to enter the house of God, and obliged his whole family to leave it, on learning in the porch, that a sermon was expected on the subject of peace! Our agent afterwards called upon him at his house, and, reminding him of what he had done, he said he had come to see him, on the presumption that such a man must have strong reasons for such conduct; but what was his surprise to find that the deacon had no definite, settled reasons to urge in self-justification. Our agent pressed him for his reasons; but all he could say was a string of ill-defined prejudices against the cause of peace. 'He didn't want to hear or read any more about it;—God commanded the Israelites to fight;—the gospel says it is our first duty to preserve our lives;—these peace folks talk against the war and the heroes of our Revolution;—they are tories, and want to bring us all under old England again, and would be glad to see us all slaves; God says there shall be wars, and this going about to promote peace, is opposing his will,' &c., &c. It is but justice, however, to add, that this deacon

was nearly alone in his hostility to the cause of peace; and yet we find almost every where "sporadic cases" of the war-mania even among professed Christians.

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#### WAR-PRAYERS,

##### OR THE INCONSISTENCY OF WAR WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

When the influence of Napoleon had led to a proclamation of war between Sweden and England, though the affair seems never to have gone much beyond a mere proclamation, an additional prayer, Dr. Henderson informs us, was introduced as usual, into the church-service of Sweden to call down wrath and ruin on her enemies, and all worshippers were required of course to pray every Sabbath, if not every day, *against* them. But some of the Christians in Dalecarlin, on finding this war-prayer obtruded upon their devotions, very naturally asked, "Who are our enemies? Against whom must we thus pray?" "The English!" "The English!" they exclaimed in surprise. "It is impossible! The English cannot be our enemies; for they sent us Bibles, and it cannot be that *they* have become our enemies." Those honest-minded people could not pray against such benefactors, and would not rest till they had petitioned the government with success for the discontinuance of the war-prayer in that part of the Swedish dominions.

1. Here is an illustration of the hardships to which the war-system reduces the great mass of Christians through Christendom. In nearly all countries but our own, they are compelled, like those in Sweden, to repeat, at least in all their *public* devotions, a prescribed form of imprecation upon those whom the government in its caprice may choose to call enemies; and thus have the great mass of Christians in every country been tempted, ever since the time of Constantine the Great, to deny in practice the leading principle taught in the sermon on the mount.

2. Here we see the insidious influence of the war-policy in debasing our religion. It dictates to Christians the subject and form of their prayers, and contrives in this way to instil into them a spirit as unlike that of the gospel as hell itself is unlike heaven.

3. This practice, moreover, is a public and most effectual endorsement of the whole war-system by the church of Christ;